

Ocotillo Express Wind Energy Facility

Toward a safe, clean energy future: The Ocotillo Express Wind Energy Facility is proposed on approx. 10,151 acres of BLM-administered land in southwestern Imperial County, California, and will produce up to 315 megawatts of clean energy, enough to power 94,500 homes.

VITALS

Location: Imperial County, CA

Technology: Wind turbines

Electricity production capacity: Up to 315 megawatts

Company: Ocotillo Express LLC (Pattern Energy LP)



BY THE NUMBERS - The project is expected to:

- ✓ Produce enough electricity to power up to 94,500 homes
- ✓ Create up to 350 jobs during peak construction and up to 20 permanent jobs
- ✓ Be built on approximately 10,151 acres of BLM-administered land.
- ✓ Connect to the approved San Diego Gas and Electric Sunrise Powerlink 500kV transmission line, which runs across the middle of the proposed project site, eliminating the need for more power lines traversing BLM land.
- ✓ Offset approximately 288,000 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions per year.

STRONG ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND MITIGATION: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) worked closely with federal, state and local partners, members of the environmental and conservation community, and interested stakeholders to advance the Ocotillo Wind Energy Facility as an environmentally sound project.

- ✓ Compensation for disturbance to Flat Tailed Horned Lizard Habitat at a 1:1 ratio.
- ✓ Compensation for the loss of Burrowing Owl foraging habitat at a 1:1 ratio.
- ✓ Special status plant species avoidance/restoration/compensation plan.
- ✓ Measures to minimize project lighting and visibility of structures to reduce visual impacts.
- ✓ Eagle Conservation Plan and Avian and Bat Protection Plan to avoid, minimize, and monitor the Project's impacts to migratory birds, bats and eagles.

TRIBAL CONSULTATION: The Bureau of Land Management continues to work closely with affected Native American tribes to minimize impacts of the project. The BLM held four site visits with tribal representatives and held dozens of tribal consultation meetings with 10 different tribes. Several changes to the project were made as a result of tribal input, including:

- ✓ Eliminated 43 turbines to avoid existing cultural resources and sites
- ✓ Found nearly 2,300 acres of the project site that had been analyzed for wind turbines as unsuitable for wind energy development in recognition of the cultural resources there.
- ✓ In consultation with tribes, prepared an Historic Properties Treatment Plan-Cultural Resources Management Plan outlining methods to avoid or minimize impacts to cultural resources as project construction moves forward.

A SMART, COLLABORATIVE PROCESS: In April of 2009 the BLM committed to helping the nation reach its clean energy future by guaranteeing coordinated, focused processing, full environmental analysis and public review for specific renewable energy projects where the companies involved had demonstrated they were ready to advance to the formal environmental review and public participation process. In 2010, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar approved nine large-scale solar projects in California and Nevada with a potential output of more than 3,600 megawatts. During 2011, more renewable energy projects were approved, including Tule Wind Project, the first wind project approved on public land in the state of California since 2002.

A UNIQUE, INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIP: On October 12, 2009 Secretary Salazar and then-Governor Schwarzenegger signed an agreement directing Interior agencies and California State agencies to create a federal-state initiative to advance development of environmentally appropriate renewable energy on U.S. lands in California. In January 2012, Secretary Salazar and Governor Brown reaffirmed this commitment in an updated MOU. The BLM worked with Imperial County to analyze the effects of the Ocotillo Wind Energy Facility. This cooperative model allowed for a more comprehensive analysis of the project.

THE BIG PICTURE: The Ocotillo Express Wind Energy Facility is one of the projects that will help achieve the Administration and Interior initiative to make a rapid and responsible move to large-scale production of renewable energy on public lands. The State of California is working to achieve a 33% Renewable Portfolio Standard, which will require 15,000 – 20,000 MW of renewable energy by 2020.